

## **4-H Youth Development Apprenticeship Program**

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### **Program of Distinction Category:**

#### **Organizational Strategies Categories**

- Developing and Retaining 4-H Professionals

**Sources of funding that support this program:** The National Association of Extension 4-H Agents (NAE4HA) and National 4-H Council received funding from the Department of Labor to initiate a Youth Development Practitioner Apprenticeship in 2002-2003. The National 4-H Leadership Trust, the participating Land Grant Universities, and state 4-H associations provided additional funding for the program during 2003 and 2004.

### **Knowledge and Research Base**

Two major research based competency taxonomies were used in the design and implementation of this program. As required by the funding source, the Department of Labor Core Competencies for Youth Development ([http://www.doleta.gov/sga/sga/01-103sga\\_appC\\_ojt.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/sga/sga/01-103sga_appC_ojt.cfm)) were used as a basis for development of the apprenticeship Related Instruction (RI) and On the Job Training (OJT) framework. The DOL competencies were developed from the results of a national survey of youth workers by the DOL. The National 4-H Professional Research, Knowledge and Competencies (PRKC, 2004) (<http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/>) were merged into the framework to make the requirements more pertinent to 4-H. The National 4-H Professional Development Task Force led the 4-H PRKC study. They looked at the current data supporting the domains, examined current trends, reviewed internal and external contemporary documents for interpretation of meaning, and conducted interviews with key informants. Thus, the Apprenticeship framework, which outlines the course of study and work, is based on the six domains of the 4-H PRKC: Youth Development, Youth Program Development, Volunteerism, Equity, Access and Opportunity, Partnerships and Organizational Systems. Within each domain required RI and OJT hours are listed and defined.

## **Needs Assessment**

The need for a professional development apprenticeship arose from concerns voiced to the National 4-H Leadership Trust from all entities of the National 4-H program including state 4-H program leaders, program staff, volunteers and youth. The primary issue was that at the national level there was no unified, structured professional development system for 4-H professionals. According to Dr. Barbara Stone, National Program Leader for 4-H Professional Development, "Currently, training and professional development opportunities are not accessible, affordable, or appropriate for all 4-H educators." With this in mind and backed by the National 4-H Leadership Trust calling for more professional development based on the National 4-H Strategic Plan (2001), the leadership of NAE4-HA and National 4-H Council saw the development of a National 4-H Youth Development Apprenticeship Program as a strategy to unify our professionalism across the country and to ensure the consistency of quality 4-H Youth Development programs.

## **Goals and Objectives**

The goals of the 4-H Youth Development Apprenticeship Program are to increase the skill and knowledge of 4-H youth development professionals and to improve the quality of services to youth.

## **Target Audience**

The 4-H Youth Development Apprenticeship Program is designed for adults (18 and older) currently employed with a 4-H program and who have the desire to improve their knowledge and skills in positive youth development.

## **Program Design and Content**

### ***Type of program***

The 4-H Youth Development Apprenticeship Program is a program for the training and educating of adult youth workers to help them strengthen their skills in youth development.

### ***Methods used to deliver the program***

The 4-H Youth Development Apprenticeship Program began in the fall of 2002 with funding from Department of Labor. A national design team developed the procedures, policies, and requirements for Apprentices and Master Practitioners (mentors) who would participate in the program. In September 2003, five land grant universities became pilot sites for the program. A total of fourteen Apprentices and fourteen Master Practitioners enrolled in the program, sponsored by their state 4-H associations and their university. The five universities included Montana State University, Pennsylvania State University, University of Idaho, University of Maryland, and Washington State University.

Apprenticeship training includes several basic elements: Structured on-the-job training (OJT); Related Instruction (RI); Supervision and mentoring from a Master Practitioner; Professional standards for competence, and mastery of skills. The framework for the Apprenticeship Program consists of 345 hours of Related Instruction (RI) and 3,000-4,000 hours of On the Job Training (OJT). Related Instruction consists of educational experiences (training, workshops, courses, etc.) that engage the Apprentice in content and subject matter

information about youth development. RI is designed to provide the Apprentice a strong academic research base and understanding.

On the Job Training supplements the related instruction requirements. OJT involves the Apprentice in systematic application and practice. During OJT, Apprentices demonstrate their professional knowledge, including individual planning, program design and delivery, assessment and communication with youth, adults, the community, and co-workers. Each participant works towards certification under the guidance and supervision of a Master Practitioner. Upon successful completion of both RI and OJT, Youth Development Practitioner Apprentices can be certified by the state and federal Department of Labor as a Youth Practitioner Journeyworker.

### ***Curricula and/or educational materials***

Two educational tools were designed for this program. The Program Handbook contains information about the program, listings of core competencies, requirements for Related Instruction and On the Job Training and information pertaining to mentoring. This Handbook will soon be available in the form of an Implementation Manual on the National 4-H Headquarters website:  
<http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/>

The Related Instruction Resources Guide and bibliography offer a list of resources for each core competency to assist the Apprentice in obtaining RI hours. This guide can be accessed at:  
<http://www.nae4ha.org/ydpa/relinstructresources.pdf>

### ***Partnerships or collaborations:***

The National Association of Extension 4-H Agents (NAE4HA) and National 4-H Council received funding from the Department of Labor to initiate a Youth Development Practitioner Apprenticeship in 2002-2003. The National 4-H Leadership Trust, the participating land grant universities, and state 4-H associations provided additional funding for the program.

## **Program Evaluation**

### ***Process***

The evaluation, conducted by Sandy J. Bailey, Ph.D. of Montana State University, consisted of four components. Quantitative data was collected from Apprentices who completed "Understanding of Youth Development" and "Job Satisfaction" pre- and post-tests. Qualitative data was collected through the use of monthly logs (September 2002 through May 2003) by both Apprentices and Master Practitioners.

The Apprentice program consists of three major activities. A brief summary of the evaluation of these activities can be found below. These results are based on the results of 13 pairs of Apprentices and Master Practitioners who participated in the program throughout the nine-month pilot.

- *Time Spent with Master Practitioner (MP)*: Apprentices and MP met on a regular basis with an average of 2.7 meetings per month.
- *On-the-job Training*: Apprentices participated in more than 6,678 hours of on-the-job training (OJT). The average number of hours per month per Apprentice was 57 with a range of five to 179 hours.
- *Related Instruction*: Apprentices participating in this pilot project attended more than 1,153 hours of YDPA approved training during the nine months.

The result of these activities, based on the qualitative and quantitative data, included increased knowledge and skills in: Working with advisory boards, resource management, understanding of youth development, leadership, ability to handle criticism, broader view of Extension, confidence and preparedness, ability to handle stress, developing skills to work with teens, and time management. Three of the 13 Apprentices enrolled in higher education degree programs as a result of participating in the Apprenticeship Program.

### ***Outcomes and Impacts***

The outcome of the program was that 4-H professionals increased their competency (knowledge, skills, and behaviors) in youth development. Evaluations indicated that the apprenticeship model is an effective model for helping 4-H front-line youth workers gain skills in leadership, youth development, and Extension. Results also reported an increased level of job interest by the Master Practitioners, contributing to the vitality and retention of experienced 4-H professionals.

### ***Communication to stakeholders***

Evaluation results have been presented to the following groups: NAE4-HA national membership; National 4-H Council; Federal Department of Labor; National 4-H Leadership Trust; National 4-H State Program Leaders; and State 4-H Association Officers. Promotion of the program continues through National 4-H Headquarters, USDA.

### **Program Sustainability**

National 4-H Headquarters and state 4-H programs through the Land Grant University System now sponsor this program.

### **Replication**

This program can be replicated in each of the states and territories. The implementation manual (soon to be posted on the National 4-H Headquarters website) will give detailed instructions on how to design and implement an apprenticeship program through the Land Grant University and the State Department of Labor.

### **Rationale and Importance of Program**

Apprenticeship is an age-old model of workforce development where new or developing workers gain skills and knowledge while they are on the job working

under the guidance of a journey worker. The 4-H Youth Development Apprenticeship Program is an apprenticeship project that aims to increase professional development opportunities for youth workers and at the same time, improve services to the youth they serve.